

7-1236

20 September 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Estimates Procedure

REFERENCE: Memorandum for DDCI from DI/USAF, dated 30 August

1. We have carefully studied General Samford's "Estimate Procedure". We find it difficult to understand clearly what the dimensions of his proposal are. It is a very concentrated piece of prose, devoid of explanatory detail and of recommended action.

2. Any effort to contribute to the theory and practice of intelligence estimating is to be commended. Our own efforts to get acceptance of terms which qualify the estimates - "almost certainly, probably, ..." - are aimed at the apparent objective of this paper.

3. Nevertheless, in the field of intelligence, it is necessary to make haste slowly. It is not enough that the intelligence brotherhood agree to ascribe certain meanings to certain words. It is also essential that these exact meanings be carried to the consumer. The English language is too poor to place the burden of special meanings on such words as "strengths" and "causes"; intelligence is often too incomplete to provide action people with "direct measurements of the strengths which they must overcome or alter."

4. In the present state of the art, the writer (and the reader) must rely heavily on the use of words in a given context. It is the whole phrase, sentence, or paragraph which must carry the meaning to our readers.

5. Finally, the formal adoption of such a schematic approach could well hinder the application of intelligent judgment in the estimating process. The tendency would be for those not as familiar with the objectives of the scheme as is the author to substitute form and procedure for thought. Mechanistic procedures are useful and valid in certain situations, and advantageous in terms of the limited supply of intelligent manpower. We doubt whether the production of an NIE will ever present such a situation.

6. Some parts of this proposal could well be given further study within a program such as I have proposed to Mr. Baird as a means for getting together a body of intelligence doctrine. To this end we would welcome an opportunity to sit down with General Samford to get clarification of his proposal.

SHERMAN KENT

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National Estimates

WSAF

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
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Remarks:

Suggest we get [unclear] [unclear]  
 over for a discussion on this. I'm  
 probably confused as to just what  
 he's driving at but concede there  
 is a need to room for improvement  
 in our analytical techniques and [unclear]

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more important, the quality  
with which we set forth  
the reasoning behind our  
conclusions.

ref.